

## **REPORT OF CABINET**

**(Meeting held on 3 October 2018)**

### **1. REVIEW OF PARLIAMENTARY CONSTITUENCY BOUNDARIES (MINUTE NO 36)**

The Boundary Commission are recommending that the Test Valley wards of Blackwater and Dun Valley should become part of the New Forest East constituency, while the Boldre & Sway ward would be transferred from New Forest East to New Forest West. This follows Parliament's decision to reduce the number of members of Parliament from 650 to 600, which means an increase in the number of constituents represented by each MP and in constituency size. The proposals will produce an electorate of 72,500 for New Forest East and 71,289 for New Forest West. Plans showing the existing and proposed ward boundaries were displayed at the Cabinet meeting.

Under the next and final stage of the review process the Government will introduce a Statutory Instrument to Parliament. It is not open to local authorities or individuals to make further representations to the Commission.

### **2. SMARTER WORKING – THE CASE FOR CHANGE (MINUTE NO 37)**

The Cabinet has supported a strategic approach to the introduction of "Smarter Working", together with an implementation and budget plan for the period 2018 to 2021.

"Smarter Working" is considered to be essential for transforming and streamlining the Council to meet current financial pressures and to plan for the longer term. The strategic approach will be characterised by flexibility, with the processes that people are asked to work with continuously challenged to make sure they are fit for purpose. Performance management will in future focus on results and outcomes. It is important that the Council responds to the public's developing requirement to make contact with the Council through new technologies, such as smart phones. The importance of looking after customers who prefer to make face to face contact with the Council is however still recognised, and it is hoped some of the new systems will help to make the Council more responsive to those styles of contact as well.

It is expected that this approach will achieve greater productivity. The cost and environmental impact of work will be reduced as space is shared and used more intensively. This will accord staff more choice about when, where and how they work, supported and connected by effective and appropriate technology.

The business case in Section 4 of Report Item 4 to the Cabinet sets out the anticipated financial and non-financial benefits.

The programme for implementing change is set out in Section 5 of Report Item 4 to the Cabinet. This recognised the constraints that apply to the process, including budgets, limitations on the investment in IT and the availability and suitability of accommodation.

The budget investment plan is set out in Section 6 of Report Item 4 to the Cabinet. Effective use of new technologies, based upon the use of hybrid computers, is central

to “Smarter Working”. With the right technology choices staff will be able to work more effectively both in the office and away from it, using the internet, broadband and wireless communications to work at the most effective times and locations. The aim is also to create an attractive and inspiring working environment across the Council that supports the new work styles, increases the adaptability of space and enhances performance. In future there will be a mix of work and meeting spaces where work can be carried out.

Budget provision for “Smarter Working” has been included in the Council’s Medium Term Financial Plan capital programme for the period up to 2020/21 and totals £3.5 million over 3 years. The investment programme includes the replacement of the Meridio document filing system and the current telephone system with Office 365 and SharePoint for document management. The full implementation of Office 365 is estimated to cost £750,000 over the next 18 months, with an additional revenue cost of £200,000 per annum. A further £500,000 will be needed for the first stage of changes to accommodation at Appletree court, on the ground floor of the South Wing. Accordingly, the use of £1.25 million of the Smarter Working budget has been approved for these purposes.

### **3. REVIEW OF SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENTS WITH THEN NATIONALPARK AUTHORITY RELATING TO THE PLANNING SERVICE (MINUTE NO. 38)**

The Cabinet has agreed the mechanisms for the future efficient and cost-effective delivery of 5 of the District Council’s services areas that are currently provided by the National Park Authority under service level agreements. The majority of these agreements expire on 31 March 2019. Two of these services are core to the delivery of the planning function and the context within which they will be provided is changing as the Council’s new Local Plan introduces much higher levels of development that must be managed effectively to safeguard high quality environments. Currently, the separation of the sources of advice on trees and building conservation from the Council’s wider planning service is perceived to be hindering taking a joined up approach.

Having considered the options available, the Cabinet concluded that the tree and building conservation services should be brought back in-house, while new arrangements should be sought for the provision of the specialist ecological and archaeological services. The transfer of the tree and conservation function in-house will involve the TUPE transfer of staff.

With respect to the Ecology and Archaeology Services, it has been agreed that both Hampshire County Council and the New Forest National Park Authority should be invited to put forward proposals to this Council for the future provision of these services

The Council also subscribes to a People and Ranger service, provided by the National Park Authority, and funded from developers’ contributions to meet part of the Council’s obligations under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 to mitigate the impact of recreational pressure on the New Forest Natura 2000 site. It has been agreed that the current arrangements with the National Park Authority should be extended until March 2021, pending a further review once there is greater clarity about the Government’s longer term intentions on this issue, in about 18 months’ time.

#### **4. COMBINED FIRE AUTHORITY CONSULTATION (MINUTE NO. 39)**

The Cabinet has agreed the response to be made in respect of the consultation by Hampshire Fire and Rescue and the Isle of Wight Council on the proposed creation of a combined fire authority for Hampshire, the Isle of Wight, Portsmouth and Southampton. All members of the Council and members of the public have been encouraged to respond to the consultation on an individual basis, and details of the routes through which responses can be submitted are set out in Report Item 6 to the Cabinet.

The rationale and background to the proposed new arrangements are set out in detail in Appendix 1 to Report Item 6 to the Cabinet.

This Council's response is as follows:

“That the District Council recognises the pressure on all public bodies to deliver services in the most efficient way, in the face of financial and other challenges. Having examined the proposals and the expected outcomes, the District Council supports them, whilst emphasising the need for a smooth transition, and for the local service to be protected so there is no detrimental effect on public safety.”

**COUNCILLOR B RICKMAN  
CHAIRMAN**